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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General's Office Settles Discrimination Lawsuit

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Sept. 21, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the settlement of a lawsuit filed last year against the Indo-American Cultural & Religious Foundation of Arizona on behalf of a Phoenix man who claimed discrimination because of his national origin.

The lawsuit alleged that Freddy Saavedra, 29, and his fiancée reserved the Foundation's hall in March 2004 for their wedding reception scheduled for March 2005. The couple paid the Foundation a \$1,250 deposit.

In February 2005, the Foundation accepted a reservation for the same day and time as the Saavedra wedding reception and a \$1,000 deposit from someone of Indian descent. The Foundation then canceled Saavedra's reservation, explaining it had "double-booked" the hall, located at 2809 W. Maryland Ave. in Phoenix, and did not return his full deposit.

Saavedra, who is Hispanic, filed a complaint with the Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Division. Following an investigation, the Division concluded there was reasonable cause to believe the Foundation violated the Arizona Civil Rights Act by canceling Saavedra's reservation in favor of the person of Indian descent.

The settlement, approved by Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Bethany G. Hicks, does not constitute an admission of wrongdoing by the Foundation. The settlement requires it to:

- Adopt a policy that prohibits discrimination.
- Receive training on discrimination.
- Pay Saavedra \$7,500 in compensatory damages.

Assistant Attorney General Christopher Houk handled this case. The Arizona Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination in public accommodations based on a person's disability, race, color, religion, sex, familial status or national origin. If you believe you are a victim of discrimination, please contact the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division, in Phoenix at 602-542-5263; in Tucson at 520-628-6500; or outside Maricopa and Pima Counties at 1-877-491-5742. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 35 satellite offices throughout Arizona with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov.

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